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THE SHARE OF VERMONT IN THE PRODUCTION OF DISTINGUISHED MEN.

BY FREDERICK ADAMS WOODS.

The question of intellectual distinction is one naturally beset with difficulties and disputes, but inasmuch as Mr. William S. Rossiter in his article on "Vermont" in the March issue has stated without statistical support that Vermont has contributed an extraordinary proportion of the distinguished men of the United States it may be of interest to publish some statistics which I have on hand which have a bearing on this point. Mr. Rossiter says: "It is probable that no state in the Union was settled by choicer immigration than that which passed up the Connecticut river to the Green Mountains. Early immigration to the colonies from England brought many persons who, although of excellent British stock, had passed through a long period of privation, anxiety or bereavement. In a large portion of cases, their presence in the new world was due to political or religious persecution. In some respects such colonists could not be regarded as ideal pioneers. A large proportion, indeed, were unaccustomed to manual labor. The settlers of Vermont, on the contrary, were all acclimated, hardy, accustomed from childhood to the use of axe and gun, eager, and full of ambitious purpose to found homes and communities of their own. They were all of the same stock; they possessed the same ideals; they were animated by the same purpose. Of 85,072 population reported at the Census of 1790 approximately 81,200 were of English origin and 2,600 were Scotch. These two elements thus comprised more than 98 per cent. of the total population of the state at that period.

"It is not remarkable, therefore, that Vermont has contributed an extraordinary proportion of the distinguished men of the United States, and to the upbuilding and prosperity of innumerable communities throughout the country. To the unusual quality of the original settlers and their early trials and high ideals is in large measure due the influence exerted by the state in national councils disproportionate to her own moderate

List of Names.

| List of Names. | Total in the List Born in U.S.A. | Number Born in Massachusetts. | Number Born in Virginia. | Number Born in Vermont. | Ratios, or Number of Times the Random Expectation According to the Population at the Time of their Birth. | | |
|---|----------------------------------|-------------------------------|--------------------------|-------------------------|---|-------------|------------|
| | | | | | Mass. | Virginia. | Vermont. |
| Lippincott's "Biographical Dictionary," edition of 1895 | 3,227 | 711 | 231 | 88 | $\rho=2.8$ | $\rho=.6$ | $\rho=1.3$ |
| Same dictionary | | | | | $\rho=2.1$ | $\rho=.6$ | $\rho=1.4$ |
| Americans born A. D. 1785-A. D. 1794 | 302 | 75 | 22 | 11 | $\rho=2.2$ | $\rho=.6$ | $\rho=1.7$ |
| Born A. D. 1795-A. D. 1804 | 370 | 79 | 25 | 23 | $\rho=2.6$ | $\rho=.5$ | $\rho=1.0$ |
| Born A. D. 1805-A. D. 1814 | 464 | 96 | 23 | 16 | $\rho=2.9$ | $\rho=.8$ | $\rho=1.1$ |
| Born A. D. 1815-A. D. 1824 | 513 | 97 | 33 | 16 | $\rho=3.6$ | $\rho=.6$ | $\rho=1.0$ |
| Born A. D. 1825-A. D. 1834 | 363 | 74 | 19 | 10 | $\rho=3.5$ | $\rho=.6$ | $\rho=1.8$ |
| Born A. D. 1835-A. D. 1854 | 343 | 58 | 15 | 9 | $\rho=2.8$ | $\rho=.65$ | $\rho=1.4$ |
| Average of the above six lists | 2,355 | 470 | 137 | 85 | | | |
| Same dictionary — Americans who have received any adjectives of praise | 320 | 95 | 23 | 9 | $\rho=3.8$ | $\rho=.6$ | $\rho=1.6$ |
| Same dictionary, Americans who have been allotted extra space (20 lines) | 234 | 67 | 20 | 6 | $\rho=3.6$ | $\rho=.8$ | $\rho=1.3$ |
| Same dictionary, Americans about whom books have been written | 129 | 39 | 14 | 2 | $\rho=3.9$ | $\rho=.9$ | $\rho=.8$ |
| Same dictionary, practical types only. Bankers, merchants, lawyers, politicians, government officials, engineers, manufacturers, soldiers, selected list of the greater among the practical types. (Adjective, space and biographical method combined.) | 1,266 | 235 | 143 | 29 | $\rho=3.4$ | $\rho=1.03$ | $\rho=1.1$ |
| "Who's Who in America," edition 1908-09 | 232 | 60 | 29 | 3 | $\rho=3.0$ | $\rho=1.1$ | $\rho=.7$ |
| "Who's Who in America," edition 1910-11, practical types only (initials A-C) | 14,227 | 1,650 | 493 | 328 | $\rho=2.6$ | $\rho=.9$ | $\rho=1.7$ |
| "Who's Who in America," lawyers, judges, congressmen, government officials (initials A-C) | 1,131 | 132 | 33 | 28 | $\rho=2.5$ | $\rho=.8$ | $\rho=1.8$ |
| "Who's Who in America," engineers, inventors, architects (A-C) | 580 | 60 | 23 | .... | $\rho=2.2$ | $\rho=.9$ | .... |
| "Who's Who in America," army and navy (A-C) | 134 | 16 | 3 | .... | $\rho=2.5$ | $\rho=.5$ | .... |
| "Who's Who in America," business men, financiers, railway officials, manufacturers (A-C) | 170 | 18 | 5 | .... | $\rho=2.5$ | $\rho=.7$ | .... |
| about 4,000 | 247 | 38 | 2 | .... | $\rho=3.2$ | $\rho=.2$ | .... |
| "American Men of Science," 1906, all persons | 436 | not yet calculated | .... | .... | $\rho=2.7$ | $\rho=4.4$ | .... |
| "American Men of Science," 1906, the leading thousand | 867 | 134 | 14 | 18 | $\rho=3.4$ | $\rho=.5$ | $\rho=1.9$ |
| "American Men of Science," 1910, the leading thousand | 874 | 131 | 17 | 17 | $\rho=3.4$ | $\rho=.5$ | $\rho=1.9$ |
| Hall of Fame (list slightly extended as in <i>Science</i> , N. S., Vol. XXXII, No. 813, p. 158) | 50 | 20 | 7 | 0 | $\rho=3.3$ | $\rho=.9$ | $\rho=0.0$ |

interests in the national welfare. Moreover the rare quality of the settlers has proved to the later generation an inheritance as valuable as a strong constitution to the individual; after half a century of population drain, there remains surprising virility."

To a certain extent Mr. Rossiter is right as shown by the figures here tabulated. These form a portion of a larger collection covering the entire United States, the great part of which is still unpublished. The statistics for Massachusetts and Virginia were published in *Science* April 14, 1911, pages 568-574, under the title "Historiometry as an Exact Science." Results were shown of a systematic and objective analysis of three standard works of reference all using different methods for compiling their lists. Added to these are the records for the Hall of Fame. Those interested in probing the soundness of the foundation are referred to this article in *Science* where the question of handling the necessary errors is discussed at length.

If the same sort of measurements are made for Vermont as were there made for Massachusetts and Virginia the standing of Vermont is about half way between the two. Rough results also show that Connecticut certainly exceeds Vermont. Vermont like Maine, New Hampshire, Rhode Island and New York gives usually a slight excess above the random expectation when large groups of moderately distinguished persons are considered. For men of the greatest distinction her record is not so good. Not a single individual in the Hall of Fame was born in Vermont. Out of the 129 Americans about whom books have been written only two were born in the Green Mountain State. Only three of the 232 greater men who figure among the practical types of activity,—bankers, merchants, lawyers, politicians, government officials, engineers, manufacturers, and soldiers, were born in this same state.

For these three lists Vermont has produced less than might be expected from the size of the total white population. The ratios have been reckoned in proportion to the entire white population of the United States at the time of the birth of the men in question. This deficiency is expressed when ρ falls below unity. On the other hand the two remaining lists of the more elect names, "Americans who have received any ad-

jectives of praise," and "Americans who have been allotted extra space" give each an excess over the expectation for Vermont, or $\rho = 1.6$ and $\rho = 1.3$. As the totals for any list of especially superior names are necessarily small the probable errors are large, but as far as the evidence is yet available, there is no warrant for the assertion that Vermont has produced more than her share of *very* distinguished men. For men of moderate distinction Vermont has produced an excess above the expectation, but one is led to feel that the word "extraordinary" is a little too strong. As far as research can at present indicate Vermont is in no way entitled to the distinction of having been settled by as choice an immigration of stock as was Massachusetts (or for that matter Connecticut) and as for the virtues or advantages derived from the "use of the axe and gun" there is no evidence that such exceed the advantages of wealth and culture.*

* For further evidence on this last point see *Science*, April 9, 1909, pages 577-579, "City Boys *versus* Country Boys."